

## MINUTES OF THE MID CAMBRIDGE NEIGHBORHOOD CONSERVATION DISTRICT COMMISSION

Monday, April 1, 2024, 6:00 PM, online Zoom meeting

Commission Members present: Lestra Litchfield, *Vice Chair*; Charles Redmon, Katinka Hakuta, *Members*, Catherine Tice, Nan Laird, *Alternates*

Absent: Tony Hsiao, *Chair*

Staff present: Allison Crosbie, Preservation Administrator

Members of the Public: See attached list

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This meeting was held via online zoom webinar <https://tinyurl.com/MCApr2024> 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 831 6344 6849.

Commission Vice Chair Lestra Litchfield made introductions, explained the process for the hearing, and called the meeting to order at 6:01.

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**MC-6951: 72 – 72.5 Inman Street, by Joseph Artley & Linda Stevens.** Exterior alterations including windows, doors, and siding; construct roof deck with stair enclosure, and dormer.

Ms. Allison Crosbie, Preservation Administrator, introduced the project and showed slides of the property and explained that the review is non-binding.

Mr. Joe Artley, the owner and architect, described the project comprising 2 units, the one in front at #72 and the rear building at #72.5. He explained that he has lived here since 1991. He currently lives in the front and plans to move to the rear unit, maintaining the front unit and renting it out. At #72.5, Mr. Artley is proposing to renovate the interior, remove the mansard that makes up 20% of the structure, and construct a roof deck with stair tower. At #72 he is proposing to construct a dormer in the rear, not visible from a public way, in order to install a bathroom. Mr. Artley presented elevations showing the proposed alterations.

### Commission Questions

Ms. Litchfield asked if the building connector portion is getting higher. Mr. Artley confirmed it is.

Commissioner Nan Laird asked to confirm that the residences are attached. Mr. Artley confirmed that they are attached.

Commissioner Katinka Hakuta asked about the location of the proposed dormer. Mr. Artley showed the location on an elevation.

Ms. Litchfield asked if the proposed dormer goes to the ridgeline. Mr. Artley answered that it does go to the ridgeline. Ms. Litchfield asked Mr. Artley if he consulted with the City's guidelines. Mr. Artley said he hadn't reviewed them in a while and that the dormer is not visible from a public way. Ms. Litchfield asked if the mansard roof slants. Mr. Artley responded that it does slant about 12 inches.

Ms. Litchfield asked if he will re-use any of the existing details on the new entrance. Mr. Artley said he was not and would be happy to donate the brackets. Ms. Litchfield asked about the proposed windows. Mr. Artley answered that the new windows will be 4/1, and they are currently 2/1. Ms. Litchfield asked about the windows on the front structure. Mr. Artley said they are 6/6, and 6/9 on the first floor. Ms. Litchfield asked if the mansard roof has slate shingles. Mr. Artley replied that they are slate.

Commissioner Monika Pauli asked if there were any perspective drawings. Mr. Artley answered that he did not prepare perspectives and mentioned that the depth of the house is 15 feet deep, and the stair access is 6 feet-2 inches. Ms. Pauli asked if there were any plans to restore the front structure. Mr. Artley answered that he might be able to, and that he had considered it 25 years ago, and pointed out the existing permastone siding has kept the building very dry.

#### Public Questions and Comments

Mr. Thomas Schweitzer of 70 Inman Street and his wife Suzy expressed their support for the project.

Ms. Angela Jaimes of 72A Inman Street also expressed her support for the project.

#### Commission Comments

Commissioner Chuck Redmon commented that the applicant has taken on a difficult job and it's terrific. Mr. Redmon asked about the proposed siding. Mr. Artley responded that he wants to use fiber cement with 9-inch reveal shadow lines and said he would like the building to be grey with the color getting lighter towards the top.

Ms. Litchfield asked about the proposed windows. Mr. Artley answered that he will install Marvin Ultimate with simulated divided lites (SDL) and 2" by 2" casings.

Ms. Pauli said she hopes that the front structure can be restored. Mr. Artley replied that he hopes to do so. He recapped that his goal is to rent out the front structure and live in the rear building.

Ms. Litchfield commented that it is sad to lose the Mansard detailing even on such a small house, and that it's a charming house. She also observed that the front door is only visible at an angle. She also said she felt that the house is going to look like new construction.

Mr. Redmon commented that he thinks the change is a big improvement.

Ms. Laird agreed with Mr. Redmon and noted that given the present-day circumstances of the buildings, she is fine with the proposed alterations to the rear building.

Ms. Pauli expressed concern over the fact that there will be three very different types of buildings - the permastone clad structure, the modern structure in the back, and the adjacent historic building – and reiterated that it would be great to restore the front house.

Ms. Tice commented that the rear building is like a Victorian miniature, and she understands the practicalities of creating a contemporary house that looks like the other buildings that are currently being constructed in Cambridge, and that it's an early 21<sup>st</sup> century style being built in

many rear lots. She also said that it's sad to lose the Victorian character but understands the applicant's reasons.

Ms. Hakuta agreed with Ms. Tice and Ms. Litchfield and stated that this house is a beautiful precious house in the back, like a secret garden down an alleyway, and that it would be unfortunate to lose this character.

Ms. Litchfield asked Mr. Redmon and Ms. Laird if they still felt the same way about the proposal, and they both confirmed they did. Ms. Pauli asked about the non binding review. Ms. Litchfield replied that although the review is non-binding she is concerned about setting a precedent. She also said that she was conflicted about this, explaining that she likes the design if it were a house behind a house, but doesn't want to lose the remaining historic character, especially since the main front building hasn't been restored. Ms. Litchfield also stated that it rarely happens where the Commission is not in agreement, and she reminded Mr. Artley that it is a non-binding review.

Ms. Pauli questioned if the applicant could retain the front façade only. Ms. Tice referred to an example of this at another project that the Commission reviewed of a small house behind another structure. In that case, the applicant wanted to enlarge the living space by raising the roof but retained all the exterior features. Ms. Tice also pointed out that the project did include a new entryway, but the overall design was a modern interior within a historic exterior.

Mr. Artley expressed disappointment in the Commission's overall view of his proposal. He also pointed out that the slate roof is only 20% of the roof and the building is really just a box. He also explained that the rear structure is 80 feet from the street. He said the Commission is basing their review on only three things - the brackets, the door, and the partial slate roof.

Ms. Litchfield reassured Mr. Artley that no one on the Commission dislikes the proposed design. But she said that the view from the street that shows us an 1873 house behind an 1843 house will be lost and that is valuable in terms of the streetscape and the historic development of that street. She again said this is an unusual condition where the Commission is not all on board.

Mr. Redmon moved to accept the application as submitted. Ms. Laird seconded, but the motion was voted down 4-2 (Litchfield, Hakuta, Pauli, and Tice opposed; Redmon and Laird in favor).

The March 4, 2024 minutes were unanimously approved.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:59 pm.

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Respectfully submitted,  
Allison A. Crosbie, Preservation Administrator

**Members of the Public Present on April 1, 2024****Panelists:**

Joe Artley

72 Inman Street

**Attendees:**

Thomas and Suzy Schweitzer

70 Inman Street

Angela Jaimes

72A Inman Street