

MINUTES OF THE MID CAMBRIDGE NEIGHBORHOOD CONSERVATION DISTRICT COMMISSION

Monday, January 6, 2025, 6:00 PM, online Zoom meeting

Commission Members present: Tony Hsiao, *Chair*, Katinka Hakuta, Charles Redmon, Catherine Tice, Monika Pauli

Absent: Lestra Litchfield, Vice Chair; Nan Laird, Alternate

Staff present: Allison Crosbie, Preservation Administrator

Members of the Public: See attached list

This meeting was held via online zoom webinar <https://tinyurl.com/MC0125> 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 847 8791 5003.

Commission Chair Tony Hsiao made introductions, explained the process for the hearing, and called the meeting to order at 6:05.

MC-7193: 77 Antrim Street, by Schneidee Cyprien. Replace windows, alter fenestration on side elevations, replace front door, alter front portico.

Ms. Allison Crosbie, preservation administrator, gave a brief history of the building constructed in 1999, occupying a lot with another building constructed in 1900.

Ms. Schneidee Cyprien of NEDC explained the proposed project will maintain the overall style of the front façade but they are replacing the windows that appear to be around 25 years old with new double hung windows. The front entry porch roof will be partially enclosed, and the columns will be replaced with square full-height columns intending to reflect the window trim detailing. The porch will have new ipe decking and mahogany railings. The front door will be replaced with a more contemporary-style door. Ms. Cyprien then went over the elevations of the east and west facades showing new window configurations, including smaller windows of varying sizes that are the result of utilizing more of the interior space. Mr. Stephen Daly, also of NEDC, added that there are alterations in the rear of the building that are not visible from a public way. Ms. Cyprien stated that the siding will remain, and they will replace as needed. Mr. Daly pointed out the proposed entablature of the porch is a nod to the Greek Revival style.

Commission Questions

Commissioner Charles Redmon asked about the west elevation windows. Ms. Cyprien replied that the reduced window sizes will help maximize the interior spaces. Mr. Daly commented that homeowners would like more privacy and called attention to the west side of the building where there will be bathrooms that need privacy. Ms. Cyprien added that a new stairwell is also impacting the placement and size of the windows.

Mr. Hsiao asked what is the rationale for the varied sizes and locations of the windows. Ms. Cyprien answered that there are a lot of different rooms including a bathroom and dining room that have different requirements so the window locations respond to those factors.

No Public Questions or Comments

Commission Comments

Mr. Hsiao called attention to how the front façade has a very composed window arrangement that is repeated on the sides, creating a sense of order. Mr. Hsiao suggested maintaining the current stack of windows where the building turns the corner. Ms. Cyprien responded that the west elevation is not very visible. Mr. Hsiao then shared his screen to show the street view and pointed out examples of other buildings on the street that share this characteristic window alignment.

Mr. Redmon agreed with Mr. Hsiao.

Commissioner Catherine Tice also agreed with Mr. Hsiao and noted that there is a visual rhythm on the street reflecting a classic late 19th/early 20th century pattern that should be retained. She also said that the proposed windows appear too random.

Ms. Cyprien said she understood what the Commissioners were saying.

Mr. Daly mentioned that the homeowner's mother had lived in the house and now they want to make it their own. He also said they have a large collection of books that necessitates reducing the size of the windows. Mr. Daly offered to look at organizing the windows a little more clearly and aligning them, perhaps using a datum, and he suggested using a panel on the exterior to preserve the rectangular outline of the window.

Mr. Hsiao said these are good ideas and that there are examples of windows that have been infilled with a panel such as kitchen windows that maintain the frame with a panel infill on the lower portion to accommodate counter height. Mr. Hsiao said the Commission is supportive of these methods to preserve historic features.

Commissioner Monika Pauli commented that she also thinks that maintaining the window rhythm just around the corner of the building would be better and that those windows could even be a little bit smaller, and it would still work. And on the rest of the elevation they can reconfigure the windows however needed.

Mr. Hsiao reiterated that the windows beyond the first two can be organized however they want. He showed the street view again pointing out how those first windows on the sides are the most visible and can be seen on other houses along the street. Mr. Hsiao said he thinks keeping the first windows will go a long way toward maintaining the character of the house. Mr. Hsiao then referred to Mr. Daly's comment regarding aligning the windows and agreed that having some kind of datum line would be helpful. Mr. Daly responded to Mr. Hsiao's comments saying that they can take a look at this approach.

Mr. Redmon concurred with Mr. Hsiao.

Mr. Redmon moved to approve the proposal with the following recommendations: study the corner locations of the windows on the east and west elevations in relation to the windows on the front façade in terms of height and alignment; consider panel infills to retain the exterior outline of the altered windows.

Ms. Pauli seconded, and the motion passed 5-0.

MC-7194: 23-25 Ellery Street, by Gueve Ataie. Window, siding, and door alterations, remove chimney.

Ms. Crosbie provided a brief background on the Mansard style double house built in 1868.

Mr. Gueve Ataie, the applicant, explained that the intent of the project is to retain visible exterior features. He went on to say that they are proposing to remove the chimneys and shutters and replace the asbestos siding with clapboards, and replace windows. The project also includes removing a rear addition.

Mr. John Buckley, the architect, stated that they will bring back the original look of the building.

Commission Comments

Mr. Hsiao asked if the original siding is underneath the current siding. Mr. Buckley answered that there is most likely clapboard underneath but he doubted that it can be restored. Mr. Hsiao asked about the material of the proposed siding. Mr. Buckley answered that the clapboards would be wood.

Mr. Hsiao then asked about the window shutters. Mr. Buckley said the shutters were not historic. Mr. Hsiao asked about the dormer windows. Mr. Buckley said they are replacing them with 2/2 windows so that all the windows are uniform.

Commissioner Katinka Hakuta asked about the front porch. Mr. Buckley said the porch would stay the same.

Ms. Crosbie asked about the front doors. Mr. Buckley said they are replacing them.

No Public Questions and Comments

Commission Comments

Ms. Hakuta remarked that the Commission usually advocates preserving chimneys and asked for clarification on what is being proposed. Mr. Buckley said all the chimneys are being removed to make the building more energy efficient. He also stated that maintaining the chimney would be costly.

Mr. Hsiao shared his screen to look at the street view and pointed out that the chimneys can be seen only from specific locations. Mr. Buckley further explained that maintaining the impermeability on the roof would be problematic. Mr. Hsiao stated that since they are bringing back lost features of the house such as the wood siding, removing the chimneys would not be significant. Mr. Hsiao then asked about the proposed windows. Mr. Buckley said they are using Marvin but have not settled on the exact one. Mr. Hsiao asked if the windows would have simulated divided lites (SDL). Mr. Buckley said yes. Mr. Buckley also stated that he worked on a similar project on Hancock Street where the goal was to be respectful of the historic character and it was quite successful.

Ms. Pauli stated that she appreciates what they are doing.

Ms. Hakuta moved to approve the proposal as submitted. Mr. Redmon seconded, and the motion passed 5-0.

The December 2, 2024 minutes were approved.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:52 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Allison A. Crosbie, Preservation Administrator

Members of the Public Present on January 6, 2025**Panelists:**

Schneidee Cyprien

NEDC

Stephen Daly

NEDC

John Buckley, architect

JBA

Gueve Ataie

Broadbridge Real Estate Investments

Attendees:

Catiana Jean-Pierre

Cambridge CDD