

MINUTES OF THE MID CAMBRIDGE NEIGHBORHOOD CONSERVATION DISTRICT COMMISSION

Monday, June 9, 2025, 6:00 PM, online Zoom meeting

Commission Members present: Tony Hsiao, *Chair*, Lestra Litchfield, Vice Chair, Catherine Tice, Katinka Hakuta, Monika Pauli

Absent: Charles Redmon, Nan Laird

Staff present: Allison Crosbie, Preservation Administrator

Members of the Public: See attached list

This meeting was held via online zoom webinar <https://tinyurl.com/MC062025> 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 836 8303 1180.

Commission Chair Tony Hsiao made introductions and called the meeting to order at 6:04.

MC-7292: 43-45-47 Dana Street, by 45 Dana LLC. Exterior alterations including roof, dormers, windows, railings, porches, entries; remove 3 chimneys.

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

Lauren Harder, the applicant, explained that the project will maintain existing 10 units and preserve details on the front of the structure. She noted the renovation project will include all new utilities and all the chimneys will be removed. She also pointed out that many of the existing windows are not original to the building and they are proposing to replace all the windows but preserve the fan window in the front gable. She also went over the proposed alterations to the rear roof to gain more usable space.

Architect Sisia Daglian presented the drawings and went over the alterations including the porches that need to meet current codes as well as changes to the entrances. She also went over the mechanicals including a condenser for each unit. She also stated that they might be required to install a transformer on the site. She explained that one of the dormers will be extended and a skylight will be added. She then presented the rear elevation and said that the current vinyl siding will be replaced with fiber cement siding. She also said they are removing the chimneys including the ones in the front that are causing rot and have been a continual maintenance issue.

Commission Questions

Mr. Hsiao shared his screen to show a google street view to clarify the locations of proposed alterations.

Commissioner Katinka Hakuta asked about the choice of materials for the railings, noting that wood would be more historically appropriate. Ms. Daglian replied that the metal railings will be thin and blend into the background, and that the top of the railings would be wood to provide a better grip. Mr. Hsiao pointed out that there are examples of this type of railing in the neighborhood.

Commissioner Monika Pauli asked if they considered using round columns on the porches since the newspaper image that Ms. Crosbie had shown illustrates round columns, not the current chamfered ones.

Vice Chair Lestra Litchfield asked what brand of windows were being proposed. Ms. Daglian answered that they are using Marvin Elevate windows.

Public Questions

Liz, neighbor to Deborah Salter-Klimburg of 39 Dana Street, said she is a direct abutter and asked about the potential impact on trees and lack of privacy and noise because of the proposed rear decks. Ms. Harder responded that the trees are not being impacted, and the decks are small and not conducive to having a lot of people.

Cary Saunders of Ellery Square said she is also a direct abutter and asked about the materials of the porches and the lighting, and she thanked the applicant for the thoughtful design. Ms. Harder answered that the porches will be painted wood and there will be hooded lighting that shine down, 1 sconce per unit. Ms. Saunders asked about the mechanicals. Ms. Harder said that they are using mini splits that will be for both air conditioning and heating, and there will be no gas. Ms. Saunders asked about the potential noise. Ms. Harder said that it shouldn't be an issue and mentioned that she likes to keep the equipment off decks because they tend to vibrate.

James Stathis of Ellery Square also asked about privacy and complimented the applicants for preserving the building.

Marilee Meyer of 10 Dana Street, asked about the entrances on the sides. Ms. Daglian went over the design of the entrances and the railings. Ms. Meyer asked about the dormers, and Ms. Daglian went over the different types of dormers. Ms. Meyer then asked about one of the porch entries. Ms. Daglian replied that the landing location is awkward, which necessitated a wall as a graceful solution. Ms. Meyer asked about the window profiles. Ms. Daglian went over the existing and proposed windows.

Ms. Saunders asked about the possible transformer location. Ms. Daglian showed the location on a plan on the right-hand side of the building.

Mr. Stathis asked about the rear porch supports and their materials and is there a way to make the decks more cantilevered. Ms. Daglian said she can revise them and look at using brackets for support.

Andrew Angel of 39 Ellery Street asked for more information about the transformer size and location. Ms. Daglian showed the location on a plan and said she is not sure of the exact size. Ms. Harder stated that the size is not finalized yet but will most likely be 5 feet tall, and the pad is 6 feet by 8 feet.

Deborah Slater-Klimber of 39 Dana Street asked about the number of units. Ms. Daglian confirmed that there will be the same number of units (10).

Ms. Meyer asked if ten units triggers inclusionary units and wondered if the transformer will be buried or on top. Ms. Daglian said the transformer will be on the surface and the project does not trigger inclusionary housing because it is not a new building.

Public Comments

Ms. Meyer commented that the altered roofline does not work and wishes it would remain the same. She also stated that it would be a shame to cut the cornice to add the window under the fan light in the gable.

Commission Comments

Ms. Litchfield commented that the applicant has done a sensitive job with a building that needed a lot of TLC. She stated that it would be a shame to cut the dentil/frieze but understood the need, and recommended working with CHC staff to refine the details. She also encouraged the applicant to keep the chimneys in front because they add a lot of character to the building.

Mr. Hsiao thanked the applicant for the thoughtful proposal and concurred with Ms. Litchfield regarding working with staff to refine the window details and retaining the front chimneys.

Mr. Hsiao motioned to approve the proposal. Ms. Litchfield seconded, and the motion passed 5-0.

MC-7293: 60 Ellery Street, by Contempo Builders c/o Mike Tokatlyan. Demolish building and construct 6-story structure.

Ms. Crosbie gave an overview of the property and went over the review criteria as amended by the City Council in 2023 and 2025.

Mr. Evan Stellman, the architect, introduced Mike Tokatlyan, the applicant, and proceeded to present the proposed project encompassing the demolition of the existing building and the construction of a 6-story condo building with 29 units and noted that the project complies with current zoning. He pointed out an existing pathway that is an easement for Ellery Square and went over ADA accessibility. Mr. Stellman also went over the setbacks, the landscaping, roof deck, and showed elevations of the proposed building that include brick siding on the lower portion with row block courses and soldier course and 6/1 windows. The rest of the building is to be clad with metal and composite panels. Mr. Stellman then showed perspective drawings and aerial views and shadow studies. He pointed out that the building will be energy efficient, including a green roof as well as electricity for everything which will require a transformer on site.

Commission Questions

Mr. Hsiao asked about the height of the proposed building. Mr. Stellman replied that it is 63 feet high, but the elevator over run and stairs extend beyond this height.

Ms. Hakuta asked if they received feedback at their meeting with the neighbors regarding issues that the Commission has jurisdiction over and if they were able to incorporate any changes as a result. Mr. Stellman answered that the neighbors were generally opposed to the new building, especially the composite panels. Neighbors were also unhappy with the shadow impacts and the treatment of the pathway easement. Changes were made to the windows after the meeting.

Ms. Pauli said she had a general question which is can the people who will live there promise not to buy cars? Mr. Stellman replied that he didn't know if that could be added to a purchase and sale agreement.

Commissioner Catherine Tice asked about the composite material. Mr. Stellman answered that they were considering fiber cement panels, but the neighbors were not in favor of the panels.

Public Questions

Ms. Saunders asked if there are affordable units on the first floor. Mr. Stellman answered that they had not determined yet which units will be affordable. Ms. Saunders then referred to sheet #9 in the drawing set and asked if the square footage was correct. Mr. Stellman answered that it was not correct. Ms. Saunders pointed out that this incorrect number was carried over into the calculations for affordable housing. Mr. Stellman acknowledged that this changes the calculation to 5.5 inclusionary units.

Stine Grodul of 29 Dana Street pointed out that the pathway has been turned into a garbage tunnel that is dark and unfriendly and asked if they can change that.

Zion Sherin of 401 Washington Street asked if the applicant has consent to develop over the easement. Mr. Tokatlyan replied that working out the easement happens later. Mr. Sherin asked if there's a way to build over the easement. Mr. Stellman said there are ways to build over it.

Kevin Coady of 300 Broadway asked how many additional cars are projected. Mr. Stellman responded that there is no parking as part of this project and indicated that there are nearby bike stations and public transportation.

Mr. Stathis asked how they calculated the number of garbage bins. Mr. Stellman stated that the garbage will be collected by a private company, not the City, and that they have allocated for one dumpster and a series of recyclable bins. The pickup schedule could be once or twice a week, but that has not been worked out yet.

Mary Beth Lawton of 54 Ellery Street noted that the residents of Ellery Square will have to walk through the building. Mr. Stellman explained that the walkway is fully exterior. Ms. Lawton asked if they considered that bicyclists still own cars and in the wintertime they will be using them more. Mr. Stellman acknowledged that this could be the case.

Downing Lu of 63 Ellery Street asked how will the dumpster be accessed and if there would be rodent mitigation. Mr. Stellman showed the plan for the cedar trash enclosure and noted that there is currently no composting planned and stated that they haven't worked out how the trash will be accessed yet. Ms. Lu asked about the frequency of pickup. Mr. Stellman stated that the private company could potentially come the same day as the City pickup but that still needs to be worked out. Ms. Lu asked how loud will it be. Mr. Stellman said he did not know. Ms. Lu asked about the landscaping and the existing trees on the site. Mr. Stellman showed a landscape plan and said that the existing trees will need to be removed and stated that the landscape plan does pass the City's cool factor. Mr. Stellman then showed the proposed locations of new trees on the site. Ms. Lu asked about the City's requirements regarding

removal of mature trees. Mr. Stellman explained the calculations for replacing trees based on the number and size of the trees.

Ms. Salter-Klimburg asked if there was any recourse to the fact that parking isn't being added as part of the project. Mr. Stellman explained they are not required to provide parking. Ms. Crosbie advised notifying the Transportation Department and the City Council her concerns and reiterated that the City eliminated parking requirements for new construction.

Yasemin Isler of 432 Broadway commented that the drawings are not to scale and asked about the square footage. Mr. Stellman answered that they can produce additional drawings. Mr. Hsiao mentioned that they could transpose the proposed building onto photographs to better capture the scale. Ms. Isler noted that the equipment on the roof makes the building look more like an 8-floor building and asked about the HVAC and the potential sound impacts from the equipment and parties on the deck. Mr. Stellman answered that they can look at mitigating noise impacts.

Susanna Arteta of 432 Broadway asked about traffic impacts and if there could be a pull-off for Uber cars and deliveries, and she asked for clarification regarding the trash area. Mr. Stellman said he would have to look through the permitting requirements regarding traffic studies and that they do not have space on the site for a pull-off. Regarding the trash, he said they have planned for 8 recycling bins and one dumpster. Ms. Arteta then asked if FedEx would have access to the lobby. Mr. Stellman replied that they would have access.

Marilee Meyer of 10 Dana Street asked about the building height and if there are rooftop amenities. Mr. Stellman explained that the height was measured from the grade at the front of the building to the roof.

Ned Melanson of 163 Allston Street asked how many units would be for families. Mr. Stellman replied that there are 7 2-bedroom units and 17 1-bedroom units. Ms. Litchfield interjected and asked how a family unit is defined because she believed three bedrooms constitutes a family size unit. Mr. Stellman said he did not know and that he doesn't think it's defined in the Code.

Lisa Randall of 11-13 Cleveland Street commented that a lot of issues have been raised and asked if it's possible to step back and consider some of these issues, noting that the bike lanes will most likely be used by Uber drivers trying to pull over and pick up customers. She also mentioned that she is installing solar panels, and she is next door to the project so the building will have an impact on the amount of solar power.

Justin Saif of Hurley Street asked how many homes have been added to Mid Cambridge in the past decade. He also asked how much does it cost to build an affordable home. He also asked about the process for selecting tenants for the inclusionary units and remarked on the number of people on the waiting list.

Ronald Mortara of Ellery Square asked about bicycle storage. Mr. Stellman answered that each unit would have one bicycle storage space in the basement.

Nasser Khajehnoori of Ellery Square asked if one bicycle space per unit was enough, and what is the exact number of inclusionary units because the number seems to change and asked

about the shadow impacts. Mr. Stellman replied that for today's presentation he ran the numbers and came up with 5.4 inclusionary dwelling units. He went over the shadow study and said that the plants in the Ellery Square courtyard would benefit from morning and afternoon sun. Mr. Hsiao interjected and explained that applicants typically do shadow studies with two colors to differentiate the existing shadow and the extended shadow from the proposed building. Mr. Stellman said they can put that together. Mr. Khajehnoori asked about the roof deck. Mr. Stellman explained that the zoning code has three types of open space including private space which has minimum square footage and dimensional constraints, and permeable open space. He also mentioned that private roof decks now count as part of the required open space.

Drew Volpe of Ellery Square asked if the miscalculated square footage impacts the Commission's review. He also pointed out that the pathway easement allows for landscaping right on the path so what effect would that have on the trash area. Mr. Stellman answered that there is space on the right side where the trash could be stored.

Mr. Stathis asked what is the justification for demolishing the existing building. Mr. Stellman answered that the existing building is 4,500 square feet with 4 units and given the need for more housing they are trying to maximize the number of units and that keeping the building was not feasible.

Katherine Koh of Ellery Square asked for additional information/drawings of the rear of the project since that is what the residents of Ellery Square will be viewing. And she asked if the applicant would pay to replace all the plantings that will die as a result of being cut off from the sun. Mr. Tokatlyan answered that he is happy to meet with abutters. Ms. Koh also asked if the Commissioners could come to the site to better understand the conditions and impact of what is really an 8-story building. Mr. Hsiao said the Commission could discuss that and typically the Commission has done site visits when a project is underway.

Mr. Sherin asked if there were other buildings in the neighborhood that had composite panels, and noted there are other brick buildings on the street. Mr. Stellman answered that they hadn't modeled a 6-story brick building. Mr. Sherin asked about the height of the building with the elevator. Mr. Stellman said the height is 77 feet with the elevator.

Ms. Salter-Klimburg asked about calculations to determine the appropriate number of trash receptacles. Mr. Stellman replied that he does not have calculations but that he has lived in a 4-story building that was served by one dumpster and some bins for recycling, and they were sufficient. Mr. Hsiao suggested finding examples of other projects with similar trash storage would be very helpful.

Ms. Lawton noted that she lives next door, and they own the area next to the trash and transformer and asked for clarification on the alternate location of the trash receptacles. Mr. Stellman showed a plan to clarify what he was saying. She also explained that the parking on her property gets blocked by delivery trucks and they frequently have to ask them to move. She then asked about the proposed brick. Mr. Stellman replied that the proposed brick is a thin brick system which adheres to passive house requirements.

Brendan Hickey of 54 Concord Avenue asked the applicant if they considered a loading zone. Mr. Stellman answered that they hadn't considered it but could discuss this with Public Works. Mr. Hickey asked if they considered replicating Ellery Square. Mr. Stellman said they did not.

Public Comments

Attorney Adam Kurth representing Ellery Square Home Owners Association (ESOA) commented that the proposal is counter to the general criteria that the Commission can consider for both the construction of new buildings and the demolition of existing buildings. He also stated that the Commission can consider the potential adverse effects of the proposed construction or demolition of surrounding properties. He pointed out the additional square footage represents 450% increase and is not congruous with the immediate neighborhood. He also mentioned the concerns regarding the shadow impacts especially on the plantings on their property, the loss of open space, increased noise from the roof deck, the lack of parking, increased traffic due to delivery trucks, Ubers, etc. He also pointed out the easement that goes through the property and that the design currently shows the proposed building right over it, and noted that the trash storage and transformer look to be located on that easement, and there will be a disruption in the use of the easement during construction and emphasized that it is a major point of ingress and egress for the ESOA and these easement rights cannot be infringed upon. He reiterated Ms. Koh's suggestion that the Commission visit the site to appreciate the existing conditions and impact of the construction. He also questioned the need to demolish a building that is in excellent condition.

Bill McAvinney of 12 Douglas Street stated that he strongly supports the project and that history for him is the stories of people, their struggles and successes, and mentioned how people are displaced from the city because of the high property values and people can't afford to stay here.

Diana Yousseff of Broadway expressed concern over the lack of parking which will be exacerbated by the new construction. She also pointed out that the new bike lanes on Broadway will be eliminating much of the existing parking.

James Zall of 203 Pemberton Street pointed out that new construction became more and more restrictive over the years leading to today's housing shortage, the supply didn't keep up. But now the elected City Council is trying to address this and make it easier to build more housing.

Ned Melanson expressed support for the project and understands there are valid concerns regarding the proposal, but they can be addressed such as the trash storage. He also pointed out that this project is about putting roofs over people and alleviating the housing crisis.

Lise Zieg and David Owens of 7 Cleveland Street commented that they are both supportive of higher density but feel this project has been done poorly and that it's important that they get this right because it will set the precedent for subsequent construction. Mr. Owens noted problems with the metal panels, the proportions of the walls, and the use of historicism. He pointed out that the proposed arcade has a unit behind it so that people entering the building are going by someone's private living room. He suggested that the entry be moved to the right-hand side of the building. He also pointed out that the trash storage could be inside and the

transformer vault could be located underground. He recommended rethinking the design of the ramp, which is very long and pointed out that the site slopes upward toward the right and that the ramp length could be reduced. He further suggested removing the metal panels because they are not appropriate for this project, and using brick for the whole building, and creating a clear entry point. He emphasized that he strongly supports increased housing, but it shouldn't be done poorly. He also hopes that the applicant remains open to input from the neighbors.

Carolyn Fuller of 12 Douglas Street expressed support for the project because of the current housing crisis and commented that the existing building is historically and architecturally insignificant.

Nancy Seidman of 9 Cleveland Street with Claude Barden referred to their comments submitted to the Commission as well as the City Council. Ms. Seidman requested that this hearing be continued to allow the applicant to address the concerns raised by neighbors. She added that she is in favor of density and affordable housing, but feels that the setbacks, while as of right, are not appropriate for this area. She also questioned whether the project should be subject to a special permit as it is very close to 25,000 square feet. She also commented that she doesn't see how adding 5 or 6 affordable units will address the city's housing crisis. She noted that the proposal is completely out of character for the neighborhood and that there must be a better way to address the housing crisis. She also concurred with previous concerns regarding the lack of parking, as well as issues with air pollution, traffic, solar panels, and shading.

Eoin Power of 67 Ellery Street expressed support for the project and looks forward to its construction. He pointed out that he and his wife live without a car and are very happy and think that adding 29 car-free units seems doable with the available public transportation nearby.

Ben Compaine of Ellery Square commented that the new condos will not be affordable, and they are not family-oriented, so it's not going to make a dent for affordable housing. He also commented that there will be additional cars with this number of units. Regarding density, he pointed out that 7% of residences in Cambridge are single-family, compared to 17% in New York City. He also said he doesn't think this project will add anything to street life.

Ms. Saunders read a letter written by another resident of Ellery Square, Easely Hamner, which noted that Ellery Square and 60 Ellery share a 68-foot-long property line and an easement. Mr. Hamner applauded the City Council in its effort to increase the density of the city, but the new ordinance should be more nuanced, namely by requiring a setback at 4 stories, which would be more sympathetic to the character of the neighborhood. The current proposal is third-rate at best, but the architect is certainly capable of better work and referred to their project for Lumina in Somerville. He advocated for the use of real brick on all four sides and appropriate window sizes according to the rooms they serve, such as larger ones for living rooms, smaller ones for bedrooms. Mr. Hamner also stated that the colored panels cheapen the appearance of the building and suggested looking at the reflective glass used next door at the Swiss Consulate for inspiration – by reflecting the sky, the visual mass of the upper floors would be significantly reduced. He then referred to the existing mature trees on the site that are a vital visual screen for the abutting complex, and that by increasing the rear yard depth to ten feet, the trees could

be saved. He also said the new building will also destroy the two star magnolias in the front, and there is a magnolia on the Ellery Square property line that extends into the easement and will probably die. And Mr. Hamner said that Ellery Square will protect their rights to the easement.

Mr. Khajehnoori appreciated the need to address the housing crisis but felt that the recent zoning changes are only creating new problems for the current residents, most notably the parking which will impact not only residents but visitors to the city, and believes there needs to be a more balanced approach.

Mr. Saif expressed support for the project and stated that the design of the building looks nice and will fit into the neighborhood well and stated that turning the ugly parking lot into housing will greatly improve the neighborhood. He also stated that studies show that fewer parking spaces reduce traffic and pointed out that the new building will be a green building, consistent with the City's climate goals, and the location provides close access to the green space and playground in front of the library as well as the War Memorial facilities, and will allow more people to live near the many amenities in Mid Cambridge as well as Harvard Square and Central Square. Mr. Saif commented that the project will provide accessible homes and allow seniors to continue to live in the neighborhood and provide 5 or 6 subsidized affordable homes. He also noted that a shorter building will most likely not provide any affordable homes. Mr. Saif then read a letter written by a mother who was able to get an affordable home in Cambridge.

Ms. Koh stated that she does not support the proposal and noted that the existing building is listed as being in excellent condition and doesn't understand why it needs to be destroyed. She remarked that Ellery Street is already one of the most densified streets in Mid Cambridge and one of the most heavily trafficked streets because it's the only thruway from Cambridge Street to Mass Ave. She also noted that the nearest T stations are half a mile away, at Central Square and Harvard Square, and doesn't think that retirees and disabled people are going to walk all the way to those stops, and the bus on Broadway does not run very regularly, especially on weekends. She further commented that there will be more cars and that in the wintertime people are going to need cars. She also stated that the proposal is grossly out of scale and out of character for the neighborhood.

Zion Sherin commented that while out of scale, the building should at least be all brick, and the applicant should consider not building over the easement.

Ms. Meyer stated there are a lot of practicalities to consider and there are a lot of emotional stories out there. She acknowledged the need for more housing but said the drawings do not show an accurate representation of the street, that the design is not unified and is very poor. She asked the applicant to consider reducing the number of units to provide more breathing space and address the concerns that have been raised and emphasized that context matters. She went on to say that no one is opposed to more housing but there must be some nuance, addressing context, materials, and identity, and that this shouldn't be shoehorned onto the site. She also implored the applicant to consider his reputation for the kind of work he does.

David Hattis of 393 Broadway expressed support for the project and stated that he believed that Mid Cambridge has lost homes and there is a real need for development like this, especially with the acute need for more affordable housing.

Mr. Hickey agreed with Mr. Saif and stated that developers need to max out lots because of this obstructionism, that it is so expensive to build because people throw up roadblocks everywhere and that if it was easy to build in Cambridge, people would not max out lots, but you're driving up their costs and making them build big buildings. He then again referred to term limits for the Commissioners.

Sarah Block of 24 Shepherd Street expressed support for the project and pointed out that her neighborhood has several 6-story buildings and they do not have noise or garbage issues, and parking is not an issue.

Ms. Saunders responded to the comments made by Ms. Block and urged people who are looking at 6-story buildings to also note the setbacks from these buildings because the required setbacks have changed and the existing 6-story buildings are set back 15 to 20 feet from the property line. She pointed out two large brick buildings on Ellery Street and their setbacks which are not being proposed here so it's a different orientation and relationship to pedestrians and neighbors.

Ms. Block commented that apartments in her area have no setbacks, they're right on the sidewalk, there are a lot of Harlow buildings.

Ms. Saunders responded that she used to live at 3 Chauncey Street and acknowledged that there are limited setbacks for some of the buildings near Shepherd Street, but they're in a different arrangement with other buildings around them, they're on a different type of street. The area does have a lot of Harlow buildings, but they tend to be complementary to each other and to the area around them, and she was not seeing it with this building.

Ms. Koh reiterated that she does not support the proposal because the existing building is in excellent condition. She wondered about lots like Vale Court, which is currently overgrown and not developed, when there is such an urgent need for housing. She also commented that the City should make sure that people in affordable units actually need them and that there seems to be no plan, just crazy decisions and actions driven by loud voices, and the residents who pay their taxes, follow the law, and live their lives quietly are getting hosed.

Ms. Meyer pointed out that there are two buildings on Mass Ave and on Harvard Street that are mid-rise but have been offline for almost two years while they're being renovated. She also noted that there is a large building on Dana Street, but it has a courtyard and huge setbacks, and lawns and gardens.

Mr. Saif commented that Vail Court isn't being developed because the City took it by eminent domain and the owner is suing the City, and regarding inclusionary rentals, they're 45% people who have federal Section 8 housing vouchers which means they have very low incomes.

Ms. Crosbie acknowledged receipt of public comments via email and confirmed that they were all distributed to the Commissioners.

Commission Comments

Mr. Hsiao thanked everyone for their comments and recapped that the Commission operates under a specific purview, therefore certain concerns that were raised can't be addressed. Regarding comments about the Commission's validity, Mr. Hsiao stated that all the Commissioners serve as public servants on a voluntary basis and their only motivation is to do the best they can to service the City of Cambridge.

Mr. Hsiao then opened the discussion to the Commissioners and asked Mr. Stellman to pull up the drawings on the screen.

Ms. Litchfield commented that the existing brick structure does contribute to the streetscape and the brick siding relates to the adjacent Swiss Consulate which is also brick. She also stated that she would hate to see a perfectly good building torn down.

Ms. Pauli agreed with Ms. Litchfield. She recognized the need for more housing but believes there should be a more balanced, nuanced approach, and tearing down buildings is not the answer, and pointed out that there are other places where this building would be appropriate. She also echoed a previous comment that just because you can do it, do you have to do it?

Commissioner Catherine Tice referred to Ms. Saunders' observation that the actual square footage is slightly inflated, which affects the required inclusionary units, and stated that a studio is not suitable for Section 8. She pointed out that the existing house could be converted and then go from there. She further commented that this project is not creating opportunities for more affordable housing, and the whole project must be rethought and conform in some way visually with the surrounding context. She then stated that affordable housing is the mandate, not unaffordable housing, and wondered how many people will actually benefit from this building.

Mr. Hsiao commented that no one disagrees with the need for more affordable housing and reiterated what the Commission is charged with regarding as-of-right projects, and it's challenging to weigh in on a project that complies with the new zoning but disagrees with the result. He explained that he is trying to come at this from the perspective of trying to balance competing interests. He referred to an aerial image of the site to show the city fabric and neighborhood context and noted how the project impacts the abutting properties and referred to the public comments on impacts on light and views. He suggested looking at ways to be more respectful of the neighbors. He also suggested focusing density on the front and stepping down in the back. He also commented that metal panels are problematic because they are not residential in feeling and advised the applicant to reconsider materials. He also noted that there are a lot of good examples of brick buildings that are full height in Cambridge. He said that there have been a lot of good comments and that perhaps there should be an ongoing discussion between the neighbors and the applicant and believes that urbanistically there is a way to create density and housing but also be respectful of the neighbors.

Ms. Hakuta proposed looking at the experience of the pedestrian or bicyclist. Regarding Ellery Square, she mentioned that the Commission isn't really supposed to consider what is not viewed from a public way, but it's worth considering how this is going to feel as a pedestrian

walking by the building and the overall street experience. She pointed out the review criteria in the Ordinance and how that can relate to how this project feels in this neighborhood so the Commission can talk about this street experience.

Mr. Hsiao agreed with Ms. Hakuta and asked the applicant to pull up the street view and elevations on the screen and remarked that there were some very good comments earlier from the public. He said it was very telling that the largest opening in the façade is dedicated to trash receiving/pickup. He stated that reducing the size of the entrance and the amount of ramping would be very helpful and suggested looking at how to make this feel more like a streetscape and not like a very large open trash area with a transformer. He also recommended looking at the street view of this project, particularly at the corner and the public way to the right of it. He also commented that the change in materials was not working and to look at brick for the whole structure since brick is a residential material, and metal panels are incongruous with this neighborhood, and recommended having a setback to break up the façade. Regarding the brick, Mr. Hsiao felt that brick veneer is not the way to go because it's too thin and recommended full masonry, which is more compatible with the neighborhood.

Ms. Litchfield remarked that the Commission still has purview over the proposed demolition of the existing building, but the Commission is also still trying to figure out whether it really has a role here at all, and that the new zoning has created a conflict of interest.

Ms. Crosbie responded to Ms. Litchfield and stated that this is new territory for the Commission, and that there have been good comments from the Commission as well as the public and suggested asking the applicant if he is willing to continue the hearing to revise the design to incorporate the feedback.

Mr. Hsiao also responded to Ms. Litchfield's comments saying that it's at the heart of the purpose of the Commission and this is the first real test case applying the new zoning regulations, and the Commission is seeing the direct consequence of the fulfillment of the letter of the law. He pointed out that this project complies with zoning and the Commission cannot change that but urged the Commission to make the best possible situation out of what they are grappling with. He also concurred with Ms. Tice in hoping that this dialog can continue and asked the applicant if he is willing to have further discussion with the immediate abutters in response to feedback. Mr. Hsiao asked the applicant if he would agree to continue the meeting in order to consider the comments and revise the design.

Mr. Tokatlyan said that he appreciated the feedback and agreed to continue the meeting and respond to comments. Mr. Hsiao motioned to continue the hearing to allow the applicant to have further dialog with the neighbors and address concerns. Ms. Tice seconded, and the motion passed, 5-0.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:38 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Allison A. Crosbie, Preservation Administrator

Members of the Public Present June 9, 2025

Panelists:

Lauren Harder	43-47 Dana Street
Sisia Daglian, architect	43-47 Dana Street
Mike Tokatlyan	60 Ellery Street
Evan Stellman	60 Ellery Street

Attendees:

Andrew Angel	39 Dana Street
James Stathis	4 Ellery Square
Kay K	Ellery Square
Nancy Seidman	9 Cleveland Street
Zach Durant-Emmons	
Mikki Ansin	2 Ellery Square
Drew Volpe	
Mary Beth Lawton	4 Ellery Street unit 3
Jeanne Petropoulos	
Cary Saunders	Ellery Square
Iliana Partan	9 Ellery Square
Howard Schultz	
Elizabeth Gombosi	
Suzanne Watzman	
Eoin Power	67 Ellery Street
Ben Compaine	5 Ellery Square
Brendan Hickey	54 Concord Avenue
Susana Arteta	432 Broadway
Deborah E. Salter-Klimburg	39 Dana Street
Fernando Yu	
Robert Luchetti	5 Cleveland Street
Adrian King	
Adam Wolfberg	
Danyel Logevall	
Nancy Carpenter	
Marina Atlas	
Tobias Holck Colding	
Tom Mrowka	
Lisa Randall	11-13 Cleveland Street
Gigliola Staffilani	
Justin Saif	Hurley Street
James Zall	
Downing Lu	
C Greenwood	
Naomi Dunson	
Ned Melanson	163 Allston Street
Stine Grodal	

Diana Yousef	
Dawn Baxter	
William McAvinney	12 Douglas Street
Emma Xue	
Genghis Lapointe	
Gene Doyle	
Yasemin Isler	
Suzanne Watzman	
Carolyn Fuller	
Dalisa Morales	
John Pitkin	
Beverly Mire	
W, Easley Hamner, FAIA	3 Ellery Square
Warren Mathison	
mj pullins	
Sara Nelson	
Suzanne Hamner	3 Ellery Square
Marisa Fratini	
Michael Klugerman	55-57 Ellery Street
Goldie Eder	
Fireflies.ai Notetaker Martha	
R A Humphreville	
Daniel Salomon	
Kathy Masucci	
Shellburne Thurber	
Adam Kurth - Attorney for ESOA	
Marc Mazzarelli	
Olive Patrick	
Ronald Mortara	13 Ellery Square
Marianne Mortara	13 Ellery Square
Shirin Shams	
Nasser Khadjenoori	1 Ellery Square
Adam Manacher	
Martin Chan	
Sean Hart	
George Lanzillo	
Charlotte Hambley	
Brenda Stanfield	
Lise Zeig	
Dana Tighe	
David Hattis	393 Broadway
Emma Guardia	
Zion Sherin	
Marilee Meyer	10 Dana Street
David Ring	
Christina Quinn	
Elizabeth Riker	55-57 Dana Street
Steve Jones	

Orly Ullman
David Halperin
kevin C
Maggie Dee
susanna siegel
Michael H
Edward Jones
Angela Petropoulos
Robert James
Michelle Song