

DRAFT Minutes of the Avon Hill Neighborhood Conservation District

Monday, October 25, 2021 - 5:30 PM

Commissioners Present: Constantin von Wentzel, *Chair*; Mark Golberg, *Vice Chair*, Levin Campbell, Heli Meltsner, *Members*, Art Bardige, *Alternate*

Absent: Theresa Hamacher, *Alternate*

Staff Present: Allison A. Crosbie, Preservation Administrator

Sarah Burks, Preservation Planner

Members of the Public: see attached sheet

Meeting held via online zoom webinar, <https://tinyurl.com/AHoct2021>.

Due to statewide emergency actions limiting the size of public gatherings in response to COVID-19, this meeting was held online 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 **813 9053 7580**.

Commission Chair Constantin von Wentzel made introductions and explained the procedures.

Public Hearing: Alterations to Designated Properties

AH-728: 9 Lancaster Street, by Ryan Jacobs & Elizabeth Skovira. Replace wood shingle porch roof with asphalt shingles.

Ms. Crosbie presented slides of the property, which is listed in the Avon Hill National Register District. Ms. Crosbie noted that the Commission can consider a Certificate of Hardship as well.

Mr. Ryan Jacobs, the applicant, explained that the existing wood shingles have deteriorated to the point where they have to be replaced. He managed to get two quotes for replacing in wood and asphalt with a very high difference in price. He noted that most houses on the street are asphalt and the house across the street has a metal roof.

No public questions or comments.

Commission Questions

Commissioner Lee Campbell asked if the wood shingles are original. Ms. Crosbie replied that no permit was found for replacing that portion of the roof shingles.

Commission Comments

Vice Chair Mark Golberg noted that he prefers wood shingles since it's the historic material.

Commissioner Heli Meltsner commented that this was difficult, that wood shingles are more appropriate, but the cost is significant, and noted that the houses on the street have asphalt roofs.

Mr. Golberg noted that since the rest of the structure's roof was already asphalt, it's possible to support the use of asphalt on the porch roof.

Mr. Campbell agreed with Ms. Meltsner's comments and asked about specific asphalt shingle product and color. Mr. Jacobs answered that he hadn't made a final decision. Ms. Crosbie noted that the final selection could be delegated to staff review.

Commissioner Art Bardige also agreed with Ms. Meltsner.

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Commission Comments

Ms. Meltsner preferred a Certificate of Hardship over COA because she didn't want to set a precedent.

Mr. Campbell noted that other buildings have a mix of roof materials.

Mr. von Wentzel commented that the COA could also include a finding that replacement in kind would be a hardship.

Ms. Meltsner motioned to approve the application based on the findings that most of the houses on the street already have asphalt roofs, and that replacing in kind would be an economic hardship on the applicant. Mr. Golberg seconded, and the motion passed 5-0.

AH-724: 7 Walnut Avenue, by Matthew Fisher (continued). Second floor addition; new dormer, balcony, and turret; alterations to front façade and porch, fenestration, doors, and siding; and alter rear shed.

Ms. Crosbie gave a recap of the property and showed slides.

Mr. Paul Hajian, the owner's architect, presented slides of the revised design in response to comments from last month's hearing, noting the change in geometry and how it's pulled back from the front façade. Mr. Hajian also presented an even more recent revision that simplified the fenestration as well. Mr. Hajian also presented the window survey showing the condition of the existing windows and proposing a different replacement from last time, now he would like to use all wood with matching trim and muntins. The muntins on the front would retain the 6/6 while the windows on the side would be 6/1.

Commission Questions

Ms. Meltsner asked about the south elevation. Mr. Hajian replied that the south elevation did not change.

Ms. Meltsner asked why the shutters are not being maintained. Mr. Hajian answered that there never was enough space for the shutters, and the spacing is inconsistent.

Mr. Bardige asked why change the windows from 6/6 to 6/1. Mr. Hajian replied because those windows are smaller, and he would like to let more light in, the 6/1 is a design decision. Mr. Bardige asked to confirm that all windows are being replaced and new windows added. Mr. Hajian confirmed.

Ms. Meltsner asked if there is an insulated window available with real divided lites, noting that real divided lites would be better. Several Commissioners confirmed they are available. Mr. Golberg commented that they are expensive. Mr. Hajian noted that real divided lites create thermal breaks, reducing the performance of the window. And the more lites, the further the reduction. Chair von Wentzel also noted that the muntins are typically wider than desired.

Public Comment

Mr. David Hajian commented that the smallest muntin width is 1 1/8 inches.

Commission Comments

Mr. Golberg noted that he is more comfortable with this proposal and is okay with replacing the windows.

Ms. Meltsner stated that this is a less amusing and interesting design but much more appropriate and is glad that the architect was able to work out a good-looking solution. She also liked the revised window arrangement, that it improves the symmetry lacking in the original design of the neo-Colonial home.

Mr. Campbell agreed with Mr. Golberg and Ms. Meltsner and thinks the revised design is more attractive.

Mr. Bardige stated that he would rather see a consistent window style, but he doesn't have a problem with replacing the windows.

Mr. von Wentzel appreciated that the new windows will match the overall existing details.

Ms. Meltsner believes the revised design is more respectful of the history of the house and neighborhood.

Mr. Bardige moved to approve the proposal noting the appropriateness of the window replacements and the redesign is more in keeping with the style of the house. Mr. Golberg seconded, and the motion passed 5-0.

The meeting adjourned at 6:31.

Respectfully submitted,

Allison A. Crosbie
Preservation Administrator

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October 25, 2021**

Matthew Meyer, applicant

85 Washington Avenue

Paul Hajian, architect

29 William Street, Watertown, MA

David Hajian, architect

29 William Street, Watertown, MA

Ryan Jacobs

9 Lancaster Street

Addresses are in Cambridge unless otherwise specified.