

## MINUTES OF THE MID CAMBRIDGE NEIGHBORHOOD CONSERVATION DISTRICT COMMISSION

Monday, May 4, 2015, 6:00 PM, McCusker Center, 2<sup>nd</sup> Fl., 344 Broadway, Cambridge

Commission Members present: Nancy Goodwin, *Chair*; Tony Hsiao, *Vice Chair*; Lestra Litchfield, *Member*; Sue-Ellen Myers, and Margaret McMahon, *Alternates*

Commission Members absent: Charles Redmon, *Member*; and Monika Pauli, *Alternate*

Staff present: Samantha Paull

Members of the Public: See attached list.

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Ms. Nancy Goodwin, Commission Chair, called the meeting to order at 6:04pm. She gave an overview of the meeting, procedures, and reviewed the agenda. Ms. Goodwin designated both alternates to vote, Ms. Sue-Ellen Myers and Ms. Margaret McMahon.

### **MC-4686: 16 Centre Street, by David Brackman & Debra Segal. Remove chimney, alter rear bay and alter windows.**

Ms. Samantha Paull, staff, gave a brief overview of the structure's history and the scope of the application for the non-binding review.

An owner, Mr. David Brackman, gave an overview of the project, noting that they were before the Commission in March with a different architect. Mr. Brackman stated that the application before the Commission at this hearing proposed to remove a chimney, remove windows from the right elevation, alter an existing window pair on the rear elevation into a grouping of three windows, and add windows on the rear elevation. Mr. Brackman noted that as part of the design on the first floor a window on the right elevation would have a fixed wood panel installed below what would appear as the upper sash of a traditional sash window. Ms. Debra Segal, an owner, added that the proposed changes would allow them to add a full bathroom downstairs as well as renovate the bathroom on the second floor.

Ms. Goodwin asked why they were proposing to remove the chimney. Mr. Brackman responded that the chimney would no longer be utilized once a new water heater is installed as part of the renovation as the heating system has been direct vent for a number of years.

Ms. Goodwin asked if he had floor plans. Ms. Paull responded that there were not comprehensive floor plans in the file reflecting the total impact of the chimney removal.

Mr. Brackman said that at the hearing in March the Commission requested that chimney be preserved above the roofline. Ms. Goodwin responded the Commission preferred chimneys to

be preserved rather than demolished. Ms. Sue Ellen Myers, Commissioner, added that a chimney stack above the roofline is better than nothing.

Mr. Tony Hsiao, Commissioner, made a motion to approve the application as submitted with a recommendation to preserve the chimney above the roofline. Ms. Myers seconded the motion. The motion was approved 4-0.

**MC-4688: 43 Lee Street, by HengJin Park. Replace and alter windows.**

Ms. Samantha Paull, staff, gave an overview of the structure's history and the scope for the application's non-binding review.

Mr. Zeke Brown, the architect, explained the scope in detail. He stated that the scope included the replacement of remaining historic windows on the structure's first floor and basement. He said the entire second floor has Marvin double hung sash replacement windows and that was proposed for the remainder of the structure. He said that a window would be replaced on the second floor in the bathroom with a tempered glass unit. He noted that he was proposing to have a window removal and infill on the second floor for the kitchen as well as the removal of the chimney to capture floor space in the units. He continued that the scope also included the removal and infill of a window on the front elevation and filling it in with shingles to match the existing shingles on the structure. Mr. Brown noted that the owner was a pianist who wanted to have recitals in the space but needed to be able to separate it from the other rooms of the unit; this required a wall to be constructed in the front room, which was why he was requesting approval to remove and infill the front window.

Mr. Hsiao asked for confirmation that the proposed replacement windows would match the existing Marvin windows installed on the second floor. Mr. Brown replied yes.

Ms. Margaret McMahon, Commissioner, asked if Mr. Brown as through about other solutions for the owner's need that did not disrupt the fenestration the way the proposed alteration would. Mr. Brown responded yes; however, the proposed plan was chosen because it provided some symmetry in contrast to 45 Lee Street, next door, which blocked out windows on one end. Ms. McMahon emphasized that her concern was the loss of character not how visually pleasing or symmetrical the proposal was.

Ms. Goodwin asked why it couldn't be aligned with the existing mullion. Mr. Brown responded that it would provide enough structural support in that location as the wall would be load-bearing. Mr. Hsiao stated that while he understood the need he was concerned that the removal would preclude a window from being returned either at a later date by the current owner, or by a future owner. He asked if the wall could be shifted inside. Mr. Brown responded no, but the header could be maintained on the interior framing so the window could easily be added back. Mr. Brown continued that the project included the addition of mudroom space, which further impacted the location of the wall. Ms. Goodwin asked if the window could be removed and

infilled from the interior with the trim – header, sills and mullions preserved – and the siding filled in on the exterior as commonly seen in Cambridge. She added that this would preserve the historic lines and rhythm of openings on the façade. Mr. Brown responded it was possible. Mr. Hsiao supplemented that the preservation of the window’s historic trim elements would allow a future owner to reinstall the window, should they desire to as well as preserve the structure’s continuous glazed edge and character. Mr. Brown replied yes, preservation of the trim and infill with shingles would not prevent the interior alterations.

Mr. Hsiao noted that while the Commission does not prefer to lose chimneys in the area, due to the chimney’s setback and small size, it will have a minimal impact on the character.

Mr. Hsiao made a motion to approve as submitted with the condition that the window trim, header, and sill be preserved in place with a shingle infill to match the structure’s existing siding. The motion was seconded by Ms. Myers. It was approved 4-0.

### **Minutes**

Ms. McMahon made a motion to approve the meeting minutes from April 6, 2015 as submitted. The motion was seconded by Ms. Myers. The motion was approved 4-0.

Mr. Hsiao made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Ms. McMahon seconded the motion. The motion was approved 4-0. The meeting was adjourned at 6:40pm.

**Members of the Public  
(who signed the Attendance list)**

Zeke Brown	Architect, 43 Lee Street	197 Broadway, Arlington
Will Schmitt	Owner, 43 Lee Street	25 Dana Street
David Brackman	Owner, 16 Centre Street	16 Centre Street
Debra Segal	Owner, 16 Centre Street	16 Centre Street

Note: All addresses are located in Cambridge unless otherwise noted.