

Minutes of the Half Crown-Marsh Neighborhood Conservation District Commission

Mon., Jan. 11, 2010 at 6:00 PM, Friends Meeting House, 5 Longfellow Pk., Cambridge

Members present: James Van Sickle, Chair; Bill King, member; Deborah Masterson, Grenelle Scott, alternate members

Staff present: Charles Sullivan

Members of the Public: See attached list

Chair Van Sickle called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM, made introductions, and reviewed the hearing procedures. He designated alternates Masterson and Scott to vote on all matters.

Public Hearing: Alterations to Designated Properties

HCM-70: 31 Ash Street, by Anne E. Gergen. To construct new fence and arbor in same locations as existing.

Mr. Sullivan described the application and showed slides of existing conditions.

Anne Gergen said that the intent of the project was to replace the deteriorated 6' solid fence with a new fence 4' high with a 24" lattice top. The overall height would be the same, except that the present 6' fence between the sidewalk and the cross-fence at the head of the driveway would be only 4'tall. The greater openness of the new fence would be better for gardening.

Mr. King pointed out that this was not consistent with the language of the application, which referred to an 18" lattice topper. Ms. Gergen acknowledged the inconsistency and said the new fence would be as she had described it.

Ms. Masterson moved to grant a Certificate of Appropriateness for the application as described, for a 6' fence incorporating a 2' lattice. Ms. Scott seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

HCM-71: 18 Gibson Street, by Stateside Realty Group, LLC. To renovate exterior of house including restoration of shingles, clapboards, trim and gutters; alter and add selected windows and doors: remove iron column and railings and install wood post and railings at front porch; remove chimney.

Mr. Sullivan described the application and showed slides of existing conditions.

Mark Hammer, the architect, said that it was his client's intent to restore the house. The artificial siding had already been removed, exposing the original shingles and clapboards and revealing evidence of trim that had been removed. They intended to replace the iron

railings and posts with turned wood members; remove two glass block windows on the north side; and restore or replace shingles and trim to match the original. On the driveway side, they hoped to install two skylights and metal vents for appliances. On the rear (west) elevation, the two second floor windows would have slightly higher sills, but would otherwise be the same width as the original windows. On the north elevation, one window would be shifted 2' and two glass block openings would be removed. The brick chimney would be removed.

Mr. Hammer told Mr. King that this would be a gut rehab. The HVAC compressors would be located near the foundation, in a return at the northeast corner screened by a 4' fence. He told Ms. Masterson that the original windows would be kept and new storms installed.

Don DeRocco, the project manager, described the nature of the trim that had been removed, and how it would be replaced. He told Mr. King that almost all the original clapboards and shingles would be replaced with cedar.

Mr. King was told that the chimney would not be replaced.

Mr. Van Sickle invited members of the public to ask questions of fact.

Mary Canner of 12 Gibson Street asked for a description of the gas vent on the south side. Mr. Hammer said that there would be no noise from a fan, and no odor. She recommended that the commission specify the proposed location of the compressors.

Jane Lewis of 26 Lowell Street observed that the proposed HVAC location looked best for everyone. She asked about the stained glass window, and was told that it would be restored. Mr. Hammer did not think there would be a variance issue with changing the windows, and told her that the roof vents would be plumbing stacks only.

Mary Canner asked about the garage. Mr. DeRocco said that the doors would be replaced in kind and the structure would be reroofed, but otherwise left in place. Ms. Canner asked that the commission require that the garage not be removed, because it screened the houses from one another. She asked to be consulted on any work done there, because it supported her roses. Mr. DeRocco agreed.

Philip Walton of 28 Lowell Street supported the removal of the chimney.

Francis Duehay of 26 Lowell Street pointed out that the land rose 6'-7' behind the garage, and that a retaining wall would be necessary if it were removed. He asked for reassurance that the windows would be the same all around the house, except for the higher sill on the rear; that the garage would not be removed; and that there would be no BZA relief needed. Mr. Hammer agreed on all points.

Mr. Van Sickle asked about fences, and was told that the only new fence would be installed around the HVAC units; all the other fences belonged to the neighbors.

Mr. King pointed out the importance of keeping the chimney or replacing it in kind, saying that all the houses in the neighborhood had or did have them. Mr. Van Sickle replied that chimneys were often small and deteriorated, and always in the way of an interior renovation. They could be dispensed with in a conservation district. A fake chimney would be worse than nothing. Ms. Masterson and Ms. Scott agreed.

Ms. Masterson moved to approve a Certificate of Appropriateness as proposed, on the conditions that the HVAC location be as described and that the details of the fence and garage doors delegated to the staff. Ms. Scott seconded. Mr. Van Sickle suggested that the motion provide for restoration of the stained glass window and installation of cedar shingles and clapboards. Ms. Masterson accepted the amendment, and the motion passed unanimously.

Minutes

Mr. King offered the following corrections to the minutes of Dec. 14:

- Page 1, 1st para., 1st line: “selected.”
- Page 2, 2nd para., 3rd line: “his house and the Yager²s house at 6 Camden ...”
- Page 4, 1st para., 7th line: “he showed a-an interior drawing ...”
- Mr. Van Sickle pointed out the following errors:
- Page 3, 4th para., 2nd line: “proposed”
- Page 3, 5th para., 3rd line: “so big as to have ...”

Ms. Masterson moved to approve the minutes as corrected. Mr. King seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 6:50 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Charles Sullivan
Executive Director

Members of the Public who signed the attendance sheet, January 11, 2010

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| Jane Lewis | 26 Lowell Street |
| Frank Duehay | 26 Lowell Street |
| Philip Walton | 28 Lowell Street |
| Ryan Guthrie | 18 Gibson Street |
| Mary Canner | 12 Gibson Street |
| Mark Hammer | 21 Bishop Allen Drive |
| Don DiRocca | 21 Bishop Allen Drive |
| [illegible] | 18B Browne Street, Brookline 02446 |