

## MINUTES OF THE MID CAMBRIDGE NEIGHBORHOOD CONSERVATION DISTRICT COMMISSION

Monday, June 7, 2021, 6:00 PM, online Zoom meeting

Commission Members present: Tony Hsiao, *Chair*, Lestra Litchfield, *Vice Chair*, Charles Redmon, *Member*, Margaret McMahan, *Alternate*

Absent: Monika Pauli, *Member*

Staff present: Allison A. Crosbie, Preservation Administrator, Sara Burks, Preservation Planner

Members of the Public: See attached list

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Meeting held via online zoom webinar, <https://tinyurl.com/MCjune2021>.

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 **835 9691 3574**.

Commission Chair Tony Hsiao called the meeting to order at 6:05pm and made introductions and explained the meeting procedures.

**Case MC-6179: 52 Fayette Street, by Nancy Su.** Install vinyl siding.

Ms. Crosbie showed slides of the house designed by George Fogerty.

Mr. Peng Chen represented the owner Ms. Su and described the proposal including the use of 4-inch Dutchlap vinyl painted green similar to existing color, and the window and garland details would be preserved.

### Commission Questions

Vice Chair Lestra Litchfield asked about the windows on the side of the house. Mr. Chen said they would also be preserved.

Commission member Charles Redmon asked if the applicant had looked at the condition of the clapboards. Mr. Chen replied yes, that the paint is peeling, and they decided to install siding instead of repainting it.

Ms. Litchfield asked if they considered just repainting. Mr. Chen replied yes that was discussed. The owner, Ms. Su, confirmed.

Mr. Hsiao noted from looking at photographs the building looks like it could be repainted, there is no rot visible, would the owner consider repainting? Ms. Su answered that she appreciates the architecture, but the building requires a lot of work, there are safety issues to be addressed through repairs and replacing the porch in the rear. She did get a quote for painting and it was discovered that some of the window trim was rotting.

No public questions or comments

### Commission Comments

Ms. Litchfield noted that this is a beautiful triple decker with a lot of architectural details, and she encouraged the applicant to save the clapboards and find out the extent of the rot, it's better to know if there are more issues, and no matter how nice the vinyl siding is, in the long run it will bring down the property value. Even if other buildings on the street have vinyl siding, it's not appropriate on this house.

Mr. Redmon agreed with Ms. Litchfield.

Mr. Hsiao noted that George Fogerty was a very prominent architect, and the Commission encourages homeowners to maintain the historic character of their homes. Fogerty was renowned for his work and this building is a great example. Vinyl and similar products are poor substitutes. Proper restoration and repairs can last a long time and agrees with Ms. Litchfield. He stated that this is a non binding review but the Commission is charged with protecting the historic character of the district.

Mr. Redmon motioned to reject the proposal as submitted. Ms. Litchfield added that the applicant is encouraged to restore the clapboard siding. Ms. Su said there is rot, Ms. Litchfield advised that the rot still has to be removed or it will continue to rot, and that by removing the rot, scraping the paint and repainting, the siding will last a long time. Mr. Hsiao referred to the street view and noted that the vinyl homes don't look authentic and if you compare the vinyl sided house with one that is not you can see the difference. Ms. Litchfield seconded, and the motion passed 4-0.

**Case MC-6180: 14 Leonard Avenue, by 14 Leonard LLC.** Exterior alterations including fenestration, doors, new window well.

Ms. Crosbie presented slides of the property and noted that the rear of the property abuts a private way (Youville complex), and the proposed rear deck is not visible from a public way.

Marcelo Viana represented the applicant and described the proposed changes, noting that they will be installing landscaping to screen the proposed window well.

### Commission Questions

Mr. Hsiao first clarified what is visible from a public way, and then asked if the proposed door will match the existing. Mr. Viana answered as close as possible. Mr. Hsiao noted that it appears the Pella door can be customized, and they should be able to match the existing details on the door.

### Public Question and Comment

Ms. Marilee Meyer of 10 Dana Street asked about the second-floor windows to the right of the bay. Mr. Viana clarified what they are proposing. Ms. Meyer asked about the rear deck, although a moot point.

Ms. Martina Bahlman of 12 Leonard Avenue stated that she is an abutter and has no issues with the project.

### Commission Comments

Ms. Litchfield stated she had no problem with the proposal. Mr. Redmon and Commission alternate Margaret McMahon concurred.

Ms. Litchfield motioned to accept the proposal as submitted. Mr. Redmon seconded, and the motion passed 4-0.

**Case MC-6181: 18-20 Ware Street, Cambridge Community Housing, Inc.** Install solar thermal and solar PV systems on roof.

Ms. Crosbie presented slides of the property.

Mr. Will Monson, the applicant, explained the solar thermal panels, 5 feet tall, which will reduce greenhouse gases and reduce costs as well. They are located on the north side to maximize efficiency, and the south side would not be optimal. Mr. Monson noted that they are most visible on Broadway when you're near the library.

#### Commission Questions

Mr. Redmon asked about the benefits of this system. Mr. Monson explained the reduction of operating costs, hot water costs will come down 76%. Mr. Redmon asked about the photovoltaics. Mr. Monson replied they will cover 100% electricity in summer and will still be significant throughout the year.

#### Public Questions

Ms. Marilee Meyer of 10 Dana Street asked about tax breaks for 100% affordable housing. Mr. Monson replied for solar/thermal it's the same program for all.

#### Public Comments

Ms. Meyer commented that overall this is pretty good, it doesn't affect the facades of the building, she would prefer not to see the "wedges" on the roof, but it's for the greater good.

#### Commission Comments

Mr. Redmon noted that this is a good project. Ms. Litchfield agreed, and Mr. Hsiao concurred. Mr. Redmon motioned to approve the proposal as submitted, Ms. Litchfield seconded, and the motion passed, 4-0.

Minutes for the May 3, 2021 hearing, and May 19, 2021 Architects Committee meeting were approved.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:50pm.

Respectfully submitted,  
Allison A. Crosbie, Preservation Administrator

**Members of the Public Present on June 7, 2021**

Panelists:

Peng Chen, owner rep	52 Fayette Street
Nancy Su, applicant	52 Fayette Street
Will Monson, applicant	18-20 Ware Street
Marcelo Viana, applicant	14 Leonard Avenue

Attendees:

Marilee Meyer	10 Dana Street
Martina Bahlman	12 Leonard Street