

Minutes of the Cambridge Historical Commission

April 2, 2009 - 806 Massachusetts Avenue - 6:00 P.M.

Members present: Chair King; Vice Chair Irving; Ms. Berg; Dr. Solet; Messrs. Bibbins and Crocker

Staff present: Mr. Sullivan, Ms. Burks

Public present: See attached list.

Chair King called the meeting to order at 6:06 P.M. and introduced the commission and staff. He announced that Chandra Harrington had been appointed to full membership. He designated alternate Shary Berg to vote on all cases. Mr. King described landmark procedures and protections.

Public Hearings: Landmark Designation Proceedings

Case L-85: 424-430 Windsor St. (former Immaculate Conception Lithuanian Church), Just-A-Start, Corp., owner. Review landmark study report and consider recommendation to City Council.

Mr. Sullivan showed slides and summarized the case history, which began with a petition in August 2007. The Commission had approved a certificate of appropriateness for a residential conversion in January 2008. The owner's special permit was appealed to Superior Court and was still pending. The landmark study was extended with the consent of the owner in September 2008. He described the architecture and history of the church, which was completed in 1913 in the Mission style. This style was particularly suited to this church because it was similar to Baltic church architecture. The rectory had been built in 1972, and was designed by a Lithuanian American architect. The folk ornamentation of a wooden crest at the top of the gable was noted. He explained that the church and rectory were significant under Criterion 1 as the only remaining architectural expression of Lithuanian immigration in Cambridge, and that the church is also significant under Criterion 2 for its design and its associations with Maginnis & Walsh, one of the most prominent firms associated with Roman Catholic church architecture in New England. He recommended that the Commission forward the report to the City Council with a positive recommendation for landmark designation. He reviewed the Standards and Criteria section of the report.

Mr. King asked for questions of fact from the public.

John Raulinaitis, of 65 Union Street, expressed concern about a stream running under the church, which would be disrupted with the construction of a garage in the basement. He said it could affect neighboring properties or even endanger the building. Mr. King offered the suggestion that the Commission could consider requiring engineering reports when considering future applications that affected the structural elements of the church. The Commission had no jurisdiction to decide how the building could be used.

John Belskis, a former parishioner now of 196 Wollaston Ave. in Arlington, provided a written statement on the history of the church. He said the church was significant for its social history as well as for its architecture. The effort to provide affordable housing was a good one, but it had gone too far in East Cambridge. He mentioned a Senate bill regarding 40B housing projects and the jurisdiction of historical commissions.

Joseph Grassi, of 393 Cambridge Street, spoke in support of landmark designation. The church conveyed a lot about the ethnic history of Cambridge and was an important symbol to neighborhood residents. These types of parishes had clusters of immigrant residences and businesses, much like a village.

Lauren Curry, of Just A Start Corp., said that JAS had no objection to the landmark designation and supported the report's recommendation. She expressed concern about one aspect of the report; the description of the as-of-right zoning relative to the residential re-use of an existing building was inaccurate. She read proposed corrected language, which she had submitted earlier in writing.

Mr. Sullivan said it was in the nature of a factual correction. He would confirm the proper description with city zoning staff and adjust the report. He summarized a letter of support for designation from Councilor Tim Toomey.

Rudy Belliardi, of 195 Webster Avenue, displayed photographs of Lithuanian parishioners. The church was a reference point for the families and a link to the neighborhood even if they had moved away. He asked for the photos to be included in the report.

Mr. King closed the public testimony.

Dr. Solet moved to accept the staff recommendations that the church and rectory met the landmark criteria in the ordinance, to authorize the staff to make factual corrections, to add additional written testimony and photographs, and to forward the report to the City Council with a positive recommendation for designation. Mr. Irving seconded the motion. The motion passed 6-0.

Case L-86: 1797-1803 Massachusetts Ave. (former North Prospect Congregational Church), Lesley University, owner. Review landmark study report and consider recommendation to City Council.

Ms. Burks showed slides and summarized the staff report, describing the architectural and historical significance of the church. The building had originally been built in 1845 by the Old Cambridge Baptist Church, then sold and moved to the present site by the North Avenue Congregational Church in 1867. She described a few corrections already offered by Lesley University and said they might have more to present. There were no questions from members of the Commission. Mr. King asked for public testimony.

James Rafferty, attorney for Lesley University, distributed information about the zoning proposal and minutes of the University's informational presentation to the Commission in May 2008. He explained that the University had been meeting with the neighborhood to achieve agreement and garner support for a zoning petition. He said the University supported designation and was open to exploring a preservation restriction. He recommended extending the study period to allow for further discussion of the report criteria and the four possible elements of the Art Institute of Boston project, including moving the building, lowering it, removing portions, and constructing a new addition. The University had not yet done a complete analysis of those options because the zoning process needed to be completed first. He recommended that the study be extended until the design was further developed and could be incorporated into the report.

Simeon Bruner, of Bruner/Cott architects, and his associate, [Jason Forney](#), reviewed the history of the site and displayed an image of the 1920 plan for additions to the church. Mr. Bruner reviewed the three components of the design, the church, the public gallery, and an arts commons. He described various options that had been considered for moving and lowering the building. The library use would not require interflooring the sanctuary space. He displayed the massing diagram, but noted that the design details had not been worked out.

Joseph Moore, President of Lesley University, spoke about the University's mission and curriculum. He said he looked forward to working with the Commission on the project and indicated that the University had a good track record of valuing its historic buildings. He described the good working relationship between the University and the neighborhood action committee.

Mr. King opened up the discussion for questions from the public.

James Freeman, of 25A Hillside Avenue, asked about the height of the proposed addition. Mr. Rafferty answered that a three to five story building was proposed, as presently designed. Mr. Freeman spoke in favor of maintaining the church in its current location with green space next to it. The church yard could be a place of pleasure and education for students and neighbors. The church could house the library and gallery and remaining program space could be moved to the parking lot behind University Hall. A three story building at the back of the church property would block the houses behind. He said the current proposal required too many modifications.

Marilyn Briggs, of 17A Arlington Street, said the view of the church from Arlington Street was spectacular and the proposed changes were horrible.

Peter Lang, of 1 Frost Terrace, said this was one of three remarkable churches between Harvard Square and Alewife Brook Parkway. The two lots should stand as one. The 1920 proposal was interesting but it would have been too big for the lot. He spoke in favor of AIB coming to the neighborhood, but he did not want it to destroy what was there already. He supported landmark designation and asked the Commission not to delay.

Andrea Wilder, of 12 Arlington Street, spoke about the history of the church and Arlington Street. The restoration of a building should respect the social context. She spoke in favor landmark designation and of retaining the church on its site and adaptively re-using the interior space.

Ron Axelrod, of 26 Shepard Street, distributed written comments. He supported the University's present design for the site. He spoke in favor of moving the church building over to the south and forward toward the sidewalk so that it would be more prominent and more visible. He also supported lowering the church back to its original height, because it would be more welcoming and accessible.

Gordon Moore, of 9 Rutland Street, said he had been a member of the neighborhood working group. He distributed written comments. He spoke in favor of the AIB coming to Cambridge. He said moving the building would only improve the view of the church for an additional 100 feet north on Massachusetts Avenue and from the south. The new five story building would obscure the Sears Building (University Hall). He spoke of the architectural significance of the Sears Building. He favored building behind University Hall.

Brian Kopperl, of 17 Arlington Street, spoke against moving the building forward and to the side lot. The setting was different from the original at Peabody Street.

Fred Meyer, of 83 Hammond Street, said he had participated on the neighborhood working group. He suggested a factual addition to the history of the church. When the steeple was struck by lightning in 1963, a Jewish neighbor had paid for the replacement spire because the congregation could not afford to do it. That was an important cultural note. He understood why the residents of Arlington Street objected to moving the church, but said the views along Massachusetts Avenue should be considered also and could be improved.

Kathy LaPierre supported the content of the report. She said the neighbors wanted AIB to come to Cambridge, but did not want the church moved or the yard developed. There should be a way to accomplish both.

Judith Coquillette, of 12 Rutland Street, praised Lesley for its preservation work elsewhere in the city. She spoke in favor of landmark designation and encouraged the restoration of the original steeple.

Mr. Sullivan read a letter of support for landmark designation from Dan Coquillette and a letter from Wallace Gardner expressing concern about the impacts on the three homes at Frost Terrace.

Mr. King closed public testimony.

Dr. Solet asked if a mirror image of the current design proposal could work. Mr. Rafferty answered that there had been significant study of other options but there was no application for a certificate before the Commission at present. He could ask the architects to speak to the design studies if the Commission wanted, but that wasn't the purpose of the present hearing. Mr. Moore said the massing study showed a transition from high to low from the Sears Building to the new AIB building to the church to the residential neighbors.

Mr. Sullivan recommended that the Commission ask the City Council to designate the building a landmark as it presently stood. Often, an accepted design can be incorporated into a landmark report, but there hadn't been ~~ant-any~~ significant evolution of the design during the year-long landmark study. The general standards were based on the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for rehabilitation of historic buildings. The current project did not respect several of those principles. A recommendation to designate the property now would not prevent further discussions with the University about the design as details were developed. It might be possible to move the building and make certain changes, but that would require further discussion. Designation would not preclude discussions or approval of alterations.

Mr. King objected to the review guidelines on page 19 of the report, saying that they were too restrictive. He might be willing to approve moving the building or lowering it in the future, but as written, the guidelines were too prescriptive regarding "exhaustive study" of keeping the current site and regarding lowering the height of the foundation. He asked for the University's comments.

Mr. Rafferty said he was very concerned about the language in the proposed guidelines. The report made no mention of the Commission's feedback on the design proposal in May of 2008, when it expressed a consensus over the idea of moving the church. He referred to the Commission's minutes. It seemed arbitrary to now hear a different reaction in the report to the idea. By extending the study period, the interim protections would stay in place [the study period had expired April 1st].

Mr. King said he thought it would be useful to advise the City Council about the significance of the property, but did not want to hand off a major political issue to them.

Mr. Sullivan said the process should be to designate the property a landmark, then consider applications for certificates. The designation would not preclude consideration of any application that might be made. Mr. Irving agreed, saying that the Commission would still be open to any proposal. The prescriptive aspects of the report could be revised.

Mr. Rafferty asked for more time to respond to the language in the guidelines. He said the University would consent to extend the landmark study and interim protections to July 4, 2009.

Mr. King moved that the Commission find that the church in its present location and its site met the criteria for landmark designation and to recommend designation by the City Council, subject to acceptance of a revised final report with amended language in the standards, criteria, and guidelines, which would then be forwarded to the City Council for action on the understanding that the University had agreed to extend the study and protections to July 4.

Michael Meltsner of 74 Avon Hill Street, asked to know where the Commission stood on the issue of moving the building. There was wiggle room in the report as written for moving the building.

Mr. King said he respected Mr. Meltsner's comments, but the Commission had moved from public testimony to deliberations. There was a motion on the floor.

Dr. Solet said she saw no benefit to delaying approval of the report or action of the Council. She moved to amend the motion. There was no second to her motion to amend.

The Commission voted 5-1 in favor of Mr. King's motion, with Dr. Solet voting against.

Mr. King changed the order of the agenda and called for consideration of case 2035, which had been advertised for 8:30 P.M.

Public Hearings: Alterations to Designated Properties

Case 2035: Cambridge Common, by City of Cambridge, o/b/o Prince Hall Monument Committee. Review artist's design for Prince Hall monument and consider decision of the Public Arts Commission.

Mr. King welcomed Mayor Denise Simmons and the members of the Prince Hall Monument Committee.

Mr. Sullivan reviewed the case history, which dated back to May 2007 when the Commission approved in principal a certificate of appropriateness for a Prince Hall monument on the rotunda near the cannons and the Washington monument, with a height not to exceed 6' and subject to review of design details after the design had been approved by the Public Art Commission, per the procedures of the Commission's policy on Public Art. He noted that an artist had been selected and his design presented to the Public Art Commission, which had made findings on the proposal. Members of the Public Art Commission were present.

Mayor Simmons noted that while there were many monuments to Revolutionary figures and ethic leaders on the Common, there was no mention of African American citizens of Cambridge. Prince Hall was one of the most influential African Americans in the country's history but he was not well known generally. The City Council had ordered in 2005 that a monument be erected on the Common. She noted that when the Commission held a site visit at the rotunda, the commission had encouraged the monument committee to think outside the box and not necessarily propose a tombstone shaped monument like the others. She introduced Ted Clausen, the artist chosen for the project.

Ted Clausen described his research and inspiration, the design of the monument, and the specifics of its materials and construction. He wanted the monument to convey the importance of Prince Hall in his own day and to the present day, indicate his actions, words, and legacy, and recognize those that came after him in the civil

rights movement in their own words. The words, “I am Mister Prince Hall,” and Hall’s words and actions would be inscribed on the polished inside faces of the group of five 6’ high black granite slabs. The words and actions of those who followed him would be inscribed on the matte finish outer faces of the slabs. He displayed a model and described the human scale and of the slabs. Mr. Clausen described how he was soliciting the participation of 22 high school students in Cambridge, who would help choose the quotes for the outside of the slabs. That team was being advised by a group of scholars. He said the asymmetrical siting of the monument in the dead space on one side of the rotunda would energize the space. He described the installation process. The cobblestones could be replaced, but he was interested in the possibility of a different paving material that would be more accessible.

Bill Doncaster said the shape of the monument had been left open by the Commission at the last hearing at the site. Mayor Simmons said the grouping of five slabs would grab the viewer’s attention and draw him to it.

Mr. Clausen said the viewer’s experience would not be static. There was light and space between the slabs and an opening in the grouping that would welcome the viewer into the circle.

The Commission discussed various matters about the design and maintenance including scale, accessibility, heat, reflection of light, location of lamp standards nearby, and graffiti removal.

Dr. Solet asked if there would be a full size mock up. Mr. Clausen said there would be.

Terry Hensen, of the Public Art Commission, said all of their questions had been answered. She agreed that a full size mock up was a good idea to gain an understanding of how this monument would relate to the others on the rotunda. She referred to the written remarks of the Public Art Commission.

Carol Weinhaus, a member of the artist selection committee, expressed her support for the monument, noting that she had not previously been aware of the actions and groundwork of Prince Hall in the civil rights movement.

Mr. Doncaster said the piece would contain enough information that the viewer could visit the monument more than once and still find new meaning in it.

Red T. Mitchell, historian and member of the Prince Hall Monument Committee, noted that over 5,000 black men had fought in the Revolution. If they had all defected to the British side, Americans would have lost the war. The monument would draw a lot of visitors to Cambridge.

Ms. Berg expressed her desire to inspect a mock up before taking a final vote.

Mr. Bibbins said the slabs had a soldierly affect. They might not all need to be the same height.

Dr. Solet asked about the social history context of Freemasons. Mayor Simmons said that Prince Hall used freemasonry as a way to have a voice and help his brethren gain their freedom, but the monument was not a Masonic monument. Dr. Solet encouraged the artist to choose quotes that would be inclusive.

Mr. King spoke in support of the location and concept of the design.

Dr. Solet moved to approve a Certificate of Appropriateness, which would become effective at such time that the Commission is satisfied that the following conditions have been met:

- design of the monument (not paving) meets accessibility requirements,
- final height of the slabs are approved at a site visit

- full size mock up on site is approved, and
- the design is approved by the Public Art Commission.

The date for the site visit was scheduled for May 5, 2009 at 5:30 P.M. at the rotunda on the west side of the Common. Mr. Bibbins seconded the motion, which passed 6-0.

Public Hearings: Landmark Designation Proceedings

Case L-27: 187 Magazine St., (Shell Spectacular Sign), Shell Oil Co. c/o Motiva Enterprises, LLC, owner; Tibor Hangyal, station manager. Review landmark study report and consider recommendation to City Council.

Mr. Sullivan showed slides and summarized the staff report. The sign was originally one of two signs erected in 1933 in Boston on top of a building on Commonwealth Avenue near the B.U. Bridge. In 1943 the sign was moved to Cambridge to its current location on Memorial Drive. The twin sign was destroyed years ago. This sign had been out of operation for several years. Mr. Sullivan displayed a battery-operated model of the sign. He reviewed the previous landmark studies. In 1996, the City Council had taken no action on the recommendation for landmark designation. In 2002, the proposal lacked neighborhood support and the Commission did not forward the proposal to the Council. The gas station property was put on the market last year, prompting the Commission to re-initiate the landmark study. The property had not yet been sold, but its future was uncertain. He reported on an enthusiastic response from the public in attendance at a recent Cambridgeport community planning meeting.

Tibor Hangyal, the franchise owner, said he and other franchise owners had been at odds with Shell for years. He had made several offers to buy the property from Shell but his offers had not been accepted. He expressed concern about the condition of the sign. The insulation on the wiring was gone and unsafe, which had prompted the city to disconnect the power. The sign needed complete rehabilitation, which would be very costly. Shell would not pay for it. His lease was up for renewal.

Carol O'Hara, of 172 Magazine Street, asked if any other lighted commercial signs had been designated. The sign might make the property impossible to sell because who would want to buy a property that would require the owner to maintain the sign. If the sign continued to decay, it would be detrimental to the neighborhood. Though she once loved the sign, she did not care for it in its present condition.

Mr. Sullivan answered that the proposed designation order would only protect the sign, not the other structures on the property. The sign could potentially be moved to the roof of a new building. There were designated signs in other cities, like Boston's Citco sign. He said the owner could not be forced to fix the sign.

Mr. King said the order contemplated increased maintenance costs and sale to another owner and had a complicated termination clause.

Doug Brown said he appreciated the sign because it was a signature element of Cambridge. It transcended the brand at this point. He hoped it would be preserved and restored, possibly even converted to LED lights.

Mr. King said he was willing to give it another try. He noted issues such as energy conservation and dark sky advocacy that could complicate the designation proposal.

Mr. Irving moved to find that the sign met the criteria for landmark designation, as defined in the ordinance, and to forward the report with a favorable recommendation to the City Council. Mr. Bibbins seconded the motion, which passed 5-0. Ms. Berg abstained. [Ms. Berg left the meeting].

Public Hearings: Alterations to Designated Properties

Case 2336: 1 Follen Ln. (13 Follen St.), by Audra Dainora. Install new gates, paving, front steps, railings, and alter exterior paint colors.

Mr. Sullivan showed slides and described the property.

Gregory Lombardi, of Gregory Lombardi Design, described the proposed renovations to the landscape and alterations to fencing and paving. He displayed photographs of the site. He explained that one of the owners had limited vision and required greater visual definition of the driveway, which presently shared a 30' wide curb cut with the neighbor. He proposed a heated driveway all the way to the edge of the sidewalk, rebuilding the vehicular and pedestrian gates, changing the fencing and plantings, installing bollards and chains to prevent parking over the property line, a railing around the garage ramp, detailing on the concrete walls of the garage ramp, and new granite front steps and metal handrail. He described the crushed stone and city hall paving materials. Water would be kept on site. Nothing at the back of the driveway was visible from a public way.

T. K. McClintock, an abutter at 15 Berkeley-Follen Street, said the fence had been added to the application recently. He did not have any objections other than to the fence between the two properties. He preferred the openness of the existing driveway design. It made it easier for snow removal and access to parking. The bollards were a new element. Fencing up to the sidewalk was not desirable.

Mr. Sullivan said bollards and chain were not a typical residential detail, but was more typical of public and commercial landscapes. He recommended approval of everything from the gates and beyond but to continue the hearing to a later time on the design of the area between the two driveways at the front of the property.

Mr. Irving moved to approve everything except the treatment between the two driveways at the front of the property, and to delegate approval of that aspect to the Architects Committee which could meet on site or approve revised drawings circulated electronically. Mr. Bibbins seconded the motion, which passed 5-0.

Minutes

Mr. Irving moved to approve the March minutes, as submitted. Dr. Solet noted she had not been present and would not vote. Mr. Bibbins seconded the motion, which passed 4-0.

Director's Report

Mr. Sullivan reported on the preservation awards preparations. He suggested that Sally Zeckhauser at Harvard be honored for her contributions to preservation in Cambridge. The Commission agreed.

Mr. Bibbins moved to adjourn. Mr. Crocker seconded. The motion passed unanimously, and the meeting adjourned at 11:47 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Sarah L. Burks
Preservation Planner

**Members of the Public
Who Signed Attendance Sheet 4/2/09**

Jim Shannon	820 Massachusetts Ave #407
John Belskis	196 Wollaston Ave, Arlington 02476
Helen Belskis	196 Wollaston Ave, Arlington 02476
Alice Raulinaitis	65 Union St
Sylvia Barkavich	63 Union St
John Raulinaitis	65 Union St
Robert Lenkauskas	98 Clay St
Georgette Lenkauskas	98 Clay St
Carol O'Hara	172 Magazine St
Susannah Tobin	521 Leverett Mail Center 02138
Joseph Burke	322 Windsor St
Dick Fanning	21 Cornelius Way
Delores Coleman	7 Lincoln St
Philomena Donovan	440 Windsor St
Joe Farina	333 Windsor St #2
Richard Farina	333 Windsor St #1
Harriet Ahouse	4 Newport Rd
Lauren Curry	1035 Cambridge St #12
Roby Fader	8 Newport Rd
Richard Willis	986 Memorial Dr
Eric Ritter	2 Frost Terr
Rae Ann LoDuca	43 Lincoln St
Robert LoDuca	43 Lincoln St
Peter Kim	37 Fairfield St
Gavin Kleespies	24 McTernan St
Anna Farrington	135 Oxford St
John Farrington	135 Oxford St
Sarah Farrington	18 Frost St
Peter Lang	1 Frost Terr
Helen Lipstadt	24 Bay State Rd
Ann Austin	47 Avon Hill St
Gladys Friedler	4 Newport Rd, #4
Charlotte Moore	9 Rutland St
Gordon Moore	9 Rutland St
Brian Kopperl	17 Arlington St
Doug Brown	1 Wood St
Bonnie Neilan	25 Arlington St
Peter B. Kroon	16 Linnaean St
Nicole Caplan	16 Linnaean St
Michael Meltsner	74 Avon Hill St
Heli Meltsner	74 Avon Hill St
Lillian Hsu	344 Broadway
Teri Hensick	161 Hancock St
June Ellen Mendelson	24 Arlington St
Angelica Harter	16 Arlington St
Andrea Wilder	12 Arlington St
Fred Meyer	83 Hammond St
Marie Burke	399 Windsor St
Stella Burke	325 Windsor St
Sarah Jane White	340 Columbia St

Ann Freeman	25A Hillside Ave
James Freeman	25A Hillside Ave
Marilyn Briggs	17A Arlington St
Rudy Belliardi	195 Webster Ave
Elizabeth Ricker	358 Windsor St
Nora Etkin	1783 Massachusetts Ave
Peggy Kutcher	4 Washington Ave
Joseph Grassi	393 Cambridge St
Tibor Hangyal	207 Magazine St
Matt Crane	49 Lincoln St
Melinda Lamar	10 Hamlin St
Mark Boyes-Watson	30 Bow St, Somerville 02143
Judith Coquillet	12 Rutland St
Ron Axelrod	26 Shepard St
Craig Kelley	6 St. Gerard Terr
Carol Weinhaus	64 Oxford St
Red T. Mitchell	195 Brookline St
Penelope Kleespies	105 Harvard St
Phillip Kleespies	105 Harvard St

Note: Town is Cambridge unless otherwise indicated.